COTTON CHATS

DRAPER CORPORATION
HOPEDALE, MASSACHUSETTS

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TRADE-MARK REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. AND IN CANADA

DRAPER CORPORATION

HOPEDALE MASS

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HOW MANY NORTHROP LOOMS DO YOUR WEAVERS RUN?

The automatic loom is an improved tool of which neither Capital nor Labor has made full use.

We have urged this for years. Many have listened. A few have experimented. Thoroughly convinced these few have acted.

The cotton weavers earning the highest wages in the industry today are running 48 Northrop looms per weaver. The filling is mule spun, and each weaver has the assistance of a bobbin girl to skewer the cops and fill the batteries.

The most contented weavers we know of are running 54 looms each, with bobbin filling. The bobbin girls handle 72 looms.

These mills are not bound by tradition. Sometimes executives and help come to know too many things that are not so. Inability to forget cherished beliefs on limit of capacity keeps men in the rut.

A few years after the Northrop loom was introduced, mills were running 12, 16 and 20 looms per weaver. If someone suggested 24, wise men shook their heads,

doubters said it could not be done, and labor talked about slave-drivers.

The initial advance over the common loom was enough to insure good profits and good pay. Capital and Labor were content. There was no inducement to challenge the doubters.

On this basis hundreds of new mills were built, and other hundreds changed from old to modern machinery. All prospered and good will prevailed.

But times change. A once-confident and prosperous industry has fallen upon hard places.

Wars play havoc with economic conditions. Prices of raw materials soar to unheard of heights. Wages soar with them. Costs push prices up and sales drop off to actual necessities. Curtailment and unemployment follow —painful to both Capital and Labor.

OLD REMEDIES FAIL

Curtailed output of the mills checked the rise in cotton, but has not reduced its price much, for there is a shortage. Wages do not come down, for here, too, there is a shortage the minute the industry runs full.

Keen competition develops for the limited business in sight. Sudden intensification of competition leads to a case of "nerves." Northern manufacturers complain of southern labor conditions. The southerner intimates that all cotton manufacturing is to be done in his back yard.

North and South together have only 24% of the cotton spindles of the world and in 1923 consumed only 32% of the world's cotton crop. With thousands of cotton mills in Europe, most of them buying this same high-priced cotton and some of them selling their product in this country, there ought to be a place for all our cotton mills, north and south—and there is.

Times of stress are times of opportunity; times for industry to look around and get ready for a new start that will lead to greater achievements.

There are things that may be changed. The tariff is one of them—for temporary, if not for permanent relief. Common hours of labor and equalization of other working conditions are others.

All of these are jobs for collective effort. The solution of some of them may take years.

Meanwhile, what can the individual manufacturer do on his own account?

SURMOUNTING THE HANDICAPS

America has heretofore surmounted the handicap of high wages by increased production per unit of labor—usually by the use of improved machinery.

High wages are not necessarily a handicap. They increase the purchasing power of the home market. As their bulwark we established the Protective Tariff. Behind that bulwark they vary to a certain extent according to economic conditions. They are not raised or lowered materially by the individual manufacturer.

They are a handicap if industrial executives fail to use progressive methods and improved machinery; if labor refuses to co-operate in the adoption of such measures as will make their continuance possible.

They are especially a handicap if they raise prices to the consumer when part of the consumers are not enjoying the same high wages. The farmers of the West are on a pre-war basis. Their curtailed purchasing power is a danger to the high-priced products of the East—especially textiles, where both raw material and labor costs are at the peak.

What is to restore the equilibrium? Nothing but reduction in ultmate price to the consumer, if the industry is to prosper on its present expanded basis in this country. It must come from decreased cost of manufacture. If price of raw materials and price of wages stand in the way, improved methods and improved machinery that will bring

increased product per unit of labor offer a way to this decreased cost of manufacture.

WHAT ONE MILL DID

A few years ago there were numerous strikes in the larger mills of some parts of New England for shorter hours and more pay.

One concern, as protection against an adverse outcome of the strike, took advantage of the enforced shutdown to study possibilities of increased product per weaver from its Northrop looms. Carefully and systematically the investigation went on. They failed to discover the limits of the loom, but did discover and remedy many things that limited the capacity of the help. When the strike was over, weavers who had been running 16 looms came back to run 32, with unskilled help in the form of a bobbin girl for each 64 looms. Fixers who had cared for 68 looms had sections of 128. Not a weaver was dissatified; only one fixer left. All made more pay than before the strike on a scale that gave the mill a good profit—neither of which would have been possible on the 16 loom basis.

What others have done, you can do.

The South, with new mills, new methods and new help, proved some of the possibilities of the Northrop loom in its early days while Northern manufacturers were skeptical and Northern labor antagonistic. The North as a whole has never quite caught up.

Since those early days, the steady improvement of the loom has opened up possibilities hardly realized in either section. A few progressive mills are beginning to prove them.